

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of producing a depth map for use in the conversion of 2D images into stereoscopic images ~~including~~ comprising the steps of:
- identifying at least one object within a 2D image;
allocating ~~said or each object with~~ an identifying tag to the at least one object;
allocating ~~said or each object with~~ a depth tag to the at least one object; and
determining and defining an outline for ~~each or said~~ the at least one object.
2. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the object outline is defined by a series of co-ordinates, curves and/or geometric shapes.
3. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method as claimed in ~~any preceding claim~~ 1 or 2, wherein said identifying tag is a unique ~~numerical~~ number.
4. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein identifying said at least one object occurs prior to said determining and defining step and includes the step of comparing said 2D image with a library of generic scenes.
5. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the step of determining the outline further includes tracing the at least one object pixel by pixel.
6. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the step of determining the outline further includes using straight lines to approximate the outline of the at least one object.
7. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the step of determining the outline further includes using curve approximations to approximate the outline of the at least one object.

8. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the step of determining the outline further includes using bezier curves to approximate the outline of the at least one object.

9. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the step of determining the outline further includes comparing the object with a library of curves and/or generic or geometric shapes to approximate the outline.

10. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 9 further including scaling the curve and/or generic or geometric shape to best fit the at least one object.

11. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the depth tag includes a ~~colour~~color code.

12. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 11, wherein white represents objects relatively close to the viewer, and black indicates objects relatively distant from the viewer.

13. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein said depth tag is a numerical value.

14. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 13, wherein said numerical value ranges from 0 to 255.

15. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one object is further divided into a plurality of segments, each segment being assigned a depth tag.

16. (currently amended) ~~A-The method~~ as claimed in claim 15, wherein the variation in depth of the at least one object is defined by a ramp function.

17. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein said ramp function is a linear or radial ramp.~~

18. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 1 further including tracking the at least one or each object on successive frames of the image, and determining and assigning depth tags for the at least one object in each respective frame.~~

19. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 1 further including adding a texture bump map to the at least one or each object.~~

20. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said texture bump map is defined by breaking the at least one object into a plurality of components and assigning each component a separate depth tag.~~

21. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said texture bump map is defined by ~~the~~ luminance values of individual components of the at least one object.~~

22. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said texture bump map is defined by ~~the~~ chrominance, saturation, ~~color~~ color grouping, reflections, shadows, focus and/or sharpness of individual components of the at least one object.~~

23. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 1, further including producing ~~greyscale~~ grayscale images of 80x60x8 bit resolution of each 2D image.~~

Claims 24-26 (canceled)

27. (currently amended) A method of encoding a depth map for use in the conversion of 2D images into stereoscopic images including comprising:
allocating an object identifier to an object;
allocating ~~said object with~~ a depth tag to said object; and

defining an outline of the object ~~outline.~~

28. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 27,~~ wherein said object outline is defined by a series of x,y coordinates, each x,y coordinate being separated by a curve.

29. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 28,~~ wherein each said curve is stored in a library and allocated a unique number.

30. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 28 or claim 29,~~ wherein said object outline also includes data on the orientation of each curve.

31. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 28 or claim 29,~~ wherein each said curve is a bezier curve.

32. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 27,~~ wherein said object outline is defined by at least one geometric shape.

33. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 32,~~ wherein said at least one geometric shape is defined by the form of the shape and the parameters of the shape.

34. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 27,~~ wherein ~~the encoding of said~~ allocating the depth tag of said object includes:

allocating a type of depth; and

allocating a depth for the object;

35. (currently amended) ~~A-The method as claimed in claim 34,~~ wherein the type of depth includes single value, linear ramp, or radial ramp.

Claims 36-42 (canceled)